BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

Issue: **97-41** **4** Pages
October 10, 1997

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate increased 0.4 percentage points to 8.9% (seasonally adjusted) in September.** This brought the province's unemployment rate to just under the national average of 9.0%. Among the provinces, unemployment rates were highest in eastern Canada and lowest in the west. Newfoundland's unemployment rate (18.0%) was double the national average, while Alberta (5.6%) had the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

  The increase in BC's unemployment rate was due to a combination of factors. The province's labour force grew 0.2% in September, at the same time that the number of jobs in British Columbia fell 0.3%. Nationally, the unemployment rate was unchanged from August, as a slight increase in the labour force (0.1%) was offset by a similar rise (0.1%) in employment.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **The province's youth unemployment rate rose 0.6 percentage points to 15.7% (seasonally adjusted, 3-month moving average) in August.** Despite the increase, BC's youth unemployment rate remained among the lowest in Canada. Saskatchewan (10.6%), Alberta (10.8%) and Manitoba (12.3%) were the only provinces that had lower unemployment rates for young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The national average was 16.4%, with the highest incidence of youth unemployment occurring in Newfoundland (28.3%) and Quebec (20.5%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **British Columbia's help-wanted index was unchanged at 119 (1996=100) in September.** However, the number of help-wanted in published in newspapers has risen 21.4% since the second quarter of last year. Nationally, the help-wanted index increased two points to 126 between August and September. The index rose in eight of the ten provinces. Quebec (-1 point) was the only region where there were fewer help-wanted ads in September than in the previous month. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **New motor vehicle sales in the province were 8.0% higher in August than in the same month last year.** The increase was largely due to strong truck sales, which were up 14.2% over August 1996. Car sales rose more moderately (2.0%). Motor vehicle sales were strong in all of Canada, increasing 18.1% overall.

  Year-to-date, new vehicle sales in BC were 11.6% higher than in the first eight months of 1996. Automotive sales improved in all parts of the country, with double-digit growth occurring in every province. Increases ranged from 11.6% in BC and Manitoba to 33.5% in Newfoundland. The average for all provinces was 16.9%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities decreased 12.5% (seasonally adjusted) between July and August.** Residential permits were down 10.1% while permits for non-residential construction projects declined 16.6% in value. A major factor in the decrease was the municipal workers' strike in Vancouver, which had a negative effect on building permit sales in that city.

Report **Job prospects for young people**

Did you know...?
British Columbia produces a tenth of all the turkeys raised in Canada. We have the lowest number of turkeys per capita (0.6) in the country. Manitoba (1.2) has more turkeys per capita than any other province.

Nationally, building permits were down 2.3% in August, as declines in BC(-12.5%), Ontario (-4.4%) and some of the smaller provinces offset strong growth in Alberta (16.8%) and a more moderate increase in Quebec (4.1%).

Source: Statistics Canada

- **There were 683 consumer and business bankruptcies in British Columbia in July.** Consumer bankruptcies were up 16.4% from the previous July, while business bankruptcies increased 3.1%. Nationally, consumer bankruptcies were 7.7% higher than in July 1996, while business bankruptcies declined 7.2%.

Source: Industry Canada

Housing

- **The cost of new housing in British Columbia continued to decline in August.** Vancouver's New Housing Price Index (NHPI) was 3.0% lower than in August 1996, while the NHPI in Victoria dropped 1.8%. Saint John-Moncton-Fredericton (-4.4%), Halifax (-2.9%), St. John's (-2.5%), Montreal (-0.4%) and Sudbury-Thunder Bay (-0.4%) were the only other metropolitan areas where the cost of new housing declined. Nationally, the NHPI was up 1.1%, with the strongest gain occurring in Calgary (+7.1%).

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Housing starts in British Columbia decreased 0.4% (seasonally adjusted) between August and September.** While the decline was the fourth in as many months, it was also the smallest. Nationally, housing starts fell 2.6%, largely due to a 9.9% drop in Ontario. Housing starts were down sharply in Nova Scotia (-29.9%) but increased in all other provinces except BC. Saskatchewan (+33.5%) posted the largest gain, following a 19.3% drop in July.

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

AIDS

- **The number of new AIDS cases reported in British Columbia continued to decline, with only 1 new AIDS diagnosis reported in the first three months of the year.** There were 133 new cases of AIDS reported during 1996. The disease has taken the lives of 1,870 of the 2,453 British Columbians diagnosed with AIDS since 1983. During the same period, 777,718 HIV tests have been performed, and 8,583 people have tested newly positive for HIV infection. There were 158 new positive test results in the first quarter of 1997.

Source: AIDS Update, BC Centre for Disease Control

Youth Courts

- **In 1993/94, almost three-quarters (72%) of youth court cases heard in BC resulted in a guilty verdict.** Nationally, two-thirds (67%) of youth court cases produced guilty verdicts. The likelihood of a guilty verdict being reached ranged from a low of 53% in Yukon to 90% in New Brunswick. One reason for the variation is differences in the proportion of cases that are either stayed or withdrawn.

Source: SC, Catalogue 85F018XPE

Bicycle Helmets

- **In 1994/95, the rate of bicycle helmet usage for children in British Columbia was the highest in the country.** Two out of three (65%)children in BC and in Ontario used bicycle helmets. This compares to 51% of children in Quebec and 44% of children living in the Prairies.

  Adults were less likely than children to use bicycle helmets. BC led the nation, with 27% of adults using bike helmets on a regular basis. In Ontario, 20% used helmets, while usage rates were lower in Atlantic Canada (17%), Quebec (13%) and the Prairie provinces (12%). The leading reason people gave for not wearing a helmet was that they did not own one. People who lived in rural areas were less likely to use helmets than those who lived in urban centres

  At the time of the survey on which these statistics are based, bicycle helmet usage was mandatory for children in Ontario, but not in the rest of the country. BC's bicycle helmet law was enacted in 1996. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:

October 10, 1997

Prospects for Youth in the Labour Market

Originally published in June '97 issue of *Earnings & Employment Trends,* available by subscription for $60 plus GST

Youth: How Have They Been Faring in the Labour Market of the '90s.

Between 1989 and 1996, the proportion of the young, age 15–24, who had jobs declined from 65 per cent to 53 per cent. This represents close to a 2 percentage point decrease annually over the 7 year period. In contrast, among the adult population, those over age 24, the percentage of their population that had jobs remained fairly constant. With regard to employment opportunities, youth appear to have lost out in the BC job market.

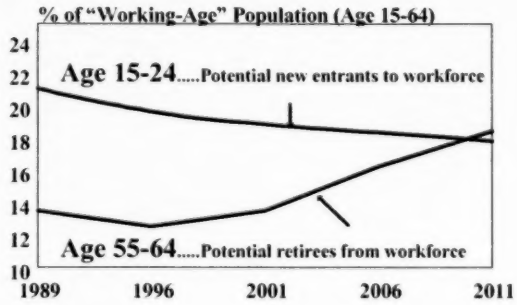
Index of Employment Rates

On the positive side, the young have not been idle as their school participation has increased to a level that almost offsets their lack of job opportunities. Currently, 51 per cent attend school full-time compared to 43 per cent in 1989. But unemployment remains high and the gap between the unemployment rates for the young and the rest of the workforce continues to widen.

Prospects for the Youth of Today and the Youth of Tomorrow

One reason why this generation of young are finding it so difficult to obtain work is demographics. They are the children of the early baby boomers and constitute a bulge flowing into the labour market that far exceeds the outflow of retirees. This coupled with downsizing in the public sector, which had traditionally been an important source of employment for the well-educated young, has resulted in a lack of job opportunities for youth.

In the 90's, Not Enough Jobs Are Opening Up for the Young



Most likely, over the next 10 to 15 years their plight will be reversed as the baby boomers themselves reach retirement age and labour shortages occur. While the age structure works against them at the beginning of their careers, the signs are that the age structure will work to their advantage in the latter part of their working lives. (This is the opposite of their parents' working life profile.) But until then, this is the group that is most at risk.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,933.3	2.0
Canada	30,286.6	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jul	2,945	-0.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul	2,189	-10.4
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul	2,706	3.9
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	Aug '97	on year ago
BC	139.9	1.1
Canada	138.2	1.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,032	2.4
Employed - BC	1,851	2.9
Unemployed - BC	181	-2.2
		Sep '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.9	9.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.0	10.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Oct 8/97	Oct 9/96
Prime Business Rate	5.25	5.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.65	5.70
- 5 year	6.70	7.65
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Oct 8/97	Oct 9/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3724	1.3545
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7287	0.7383
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jul '97	on year ago
BC	621.13	0.5
Canada	605.00	2.6

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Released this week by BC STATS

- Major Projects Inventory, September 1997
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, Third Quarter 1997 (last published 4th Quarter 1996)

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, September 1997

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